

Section 1: Drug Checking – Fentanyl Test Strips

Fentanyl strips are an enzyme immunoassay based test where a “sample can be introduced to a test strip that has been treated with a specific antibody with high affinity for the target compound, [in this case *fentanyl*]. If the target compound is preset in the sample, its reaction with the antibody causes a change of colour which is recognized as a positive result”.¹ In this testing scenario, the strips are used to test a substance directly and prior to consumption; rather than through a urine sample as originally intended.

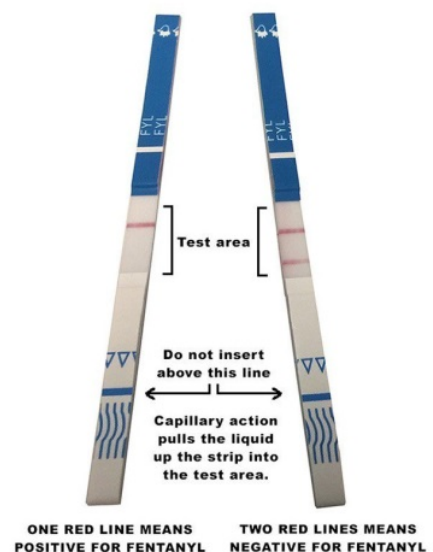
SCRIPT - Fentanyl Drug Checking

PRIOR TO DRUG CHECKING, PLEASE CONVEY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO THE PERSON:

- A negative test does not rule out that the drug contains fentanyl. Fentanyl can be irregularly distributed in the substance (i.e. pill) and although the portion tested may not have fentanyl, the remaining substance may still contain fentanyl.
- The test is not 100% accurate, and was designed for urine testing, not drugs.
- A negative result does not guarantee that your next dose will be free of fentanyl, even if the drugs come from the same “batch” or the same dealer.
- The test strip can detect fentanyl and *some* analogues, not all. It cannot differentiate between the fentanyl and fentanyl analogues.
- **Do you have any questions?**

PROCEDURE:

1. Take out a Rapid Response-Fentanyl Test Strip™.
2. Fill a paper cup with 30 mL (1 ounce) of **tap water**.
3. **Have the client** add a small drug sample (the size of a grain of table salt) into the paper cup holding the tap water.
4. Remove the test strip from the pouch (open by the notches on the package).
5. Holding the strip from the solid blue end, dip the white end of the strip into the water up to the blue line (above the wavy blue lines), wait for the red liquid line to become visible and climb the strip. There is no effect to leaving the strip in too long, but **removing it too early can lead to an incomplete test** (to avoid contamination, do not touch strip end with hands).
6. Remove the test strip from the fluid and place on a non-absorbent surface (the strip package works well), watch time, and read results at 1-2 minutes.
7. Complete documentation of drug checking interaction on *Data Tracking Form: Fentanyl Test Strips* while awaiting results.
8. **Results:**
 - One color band = Positive
 - Two color bands = Negative



***Note:** this is the opposite of what you would expect as a negative on a urine pregnancy test.

IF NEGATIVE:

- a. Indicate to the client that the dipstick only tests for fentanyl and some fentanyl analogues.
- b. A negative result does not ensure that their drugs are not adulterated with other substances which can be more toxic than fentanyl.

IF POSITIVE:

- a. Seek feedback from the client – particularly if this was an unexpected result.
- b. This is a good opportunity to provide some further education, and harm reduction tips!
- c. Provide option to dispose of contaminated drug(s)
- d. Information on availability of other supervised consumption or overdose prevention sites.

Harm Reduction Tips

Dosing Strategies: Start small, take it easy; don't use alone. Direct clients to OPS/SCS services where available.

Risks: Discuss with the client potential risks associated with a particular substance.

Mixing: Take the opportunity to discuss mixing substances and any related risk depending on the different substances.

Overdose Preparedness: Ensure access to Naloxone and training on Overdose recognition.

¹ BC Centre on Substance Use (2017). Drug Checking as a Harm Reduction Intervention. Evidence Review Report. Retrieved from, <http://www.bccsu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Drug-Checking-Evidence-Review-Report.pdf>